

SPONSA REGIS

GROVE COLLEGE
DETROIT
READING CLINIC
JULY
1955

A SPIRITUAL REVIEW FOR SISTERS



SPONSA REGIS

is a spiritual review for all Sisterhoods, published monthly, with ecclesiastical approval, by monks of St. John's Abbey, at Collegeville, Minnesota.

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Re-entered as second class matter November 20, 1952, at Post Office, St. Cloud, Minnesota, under act of March 3, 1879. Original entry at St. Paul, Minnesota, 1929. Printed by Sentinel Publ. Co., 413 E. St. Germain, St. Cloud, Minn.

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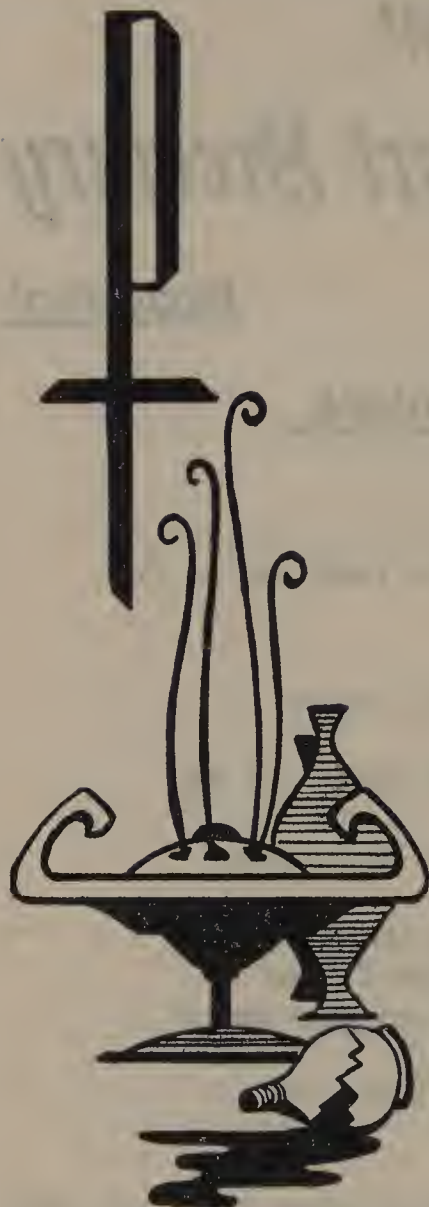
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The Social Obligation of Religious Vows

HOW BREATH-TAKING would have been the sight, could man have seen the soul of Mary as it came, newly formed, from the hand of God. Never since the creation of Adam had a human soul radiated such divine life, until she came who was the Immaculate Conception. And as the years rolled over the soul of Mary, she reflected ever greater splendor, until the day when her "fiat" shed new transcendent glory into her.

In our souls too there have been moments of breath-taking beauty. Our angels gazed in awe at our newly baptized souls. Nor were they less jubilant over the transformation wrought by the pronouncement of our vows. Like Mary, we chose at that moment to make our lives one with Christ, to be united to Him and all His members in a new way. For just as Mary in those unforgettable moments of the Annunciation became the Mother of Christ the Head of all His Mystical Members, so we, by pronouncing our vows, forged new bonds that made us mother and sister and brother to those same members. At that moment there came into being a new union of love between ourselves and our Sisters, between ourselves and the entire Church.

The obligation of unity with the Church arises out of the fact that our vows are public. The private vows of an individual, such as a vow to make a pilgrimage, are something almost exclusively between God and himself. But religious vows belong to the Church. It is the Church that sanctions and guards them.

They put the religious in a position of special relationship to the whole Mystical Body. They dedicate her in a particular way to the welfare of Christ's Body on earth, just as their violation becomes a more serious detriment to the Church than the sinful acts of a private individual. Thus our vows bind us to unity with and charity for all mankind with a bond stronger than the bonds of ordinary Christians. Indifference toward the starving millions of Asia, toward the displaced peoples of Europe, toward the slum-dwellers of America, toward social unrest, toward political corruption, toward racial intolerance, toward ignorance or hatred of God, indifference toward any problem that affects the human race, is a betrayal of the trust the Church placed in us when she admitted us to *public* vows. For our vows place us under a special obligation to put on the mind of Christ, to make His interests our interests, to espouse them by all the means compatible with the life which He calls us to lead.

Poverty should lead to a wide understanding of God's plan in providing man with material things and making him dependent on them. Poverty should teach us a use of material goods that we can apply to the ills of a materialistic world. Poverty should guide us to assist in the curing of those ills through our prayer, sacrifice and teaching.

Chastity should clear our vision, so that the evils befalling the human race because of sensual indulgence may find in us compassionate understanding and sacrificial healing. Chastity should enlarge our hearts, so that all who come in contact with us will feel the depths of the charity of Christ.

Obedience should lower in us the bars of pride and independence, vices which bring misery to man. Obedience should teach us a dependence on God that brings us to a realization of God's Providence in world events. Such a realization must inevitably force us to teach others trust in divine Providence and cooperation in God's designs for the world He created, deepening our understanding and theirs of how God has deigned to act through us as secondary causes to perfect His designs.

Surely by our vows we have not lessened our obligations toward Christ's Mystical Body. We have not only formed closer ties with God by loosening our ties with mankind, but we have increased our responsibility for all who are one in Christ. Whether

or not we accept the revelations from God purported to have been made to private individuals in modern times, a true understanding of our vows would make us come to the same conclusion as did those visionaries. That conclusion is that, whatever be the evils of our time, religious more than other men are to make themselves responsible for them. Through their love for Christ they have grown in that great charity which Christ came to bring and they can restore goodness in the world. Through them Christ's pontifical prayer is finding fulfillment: "That they all may be one, as thou Father in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us." That prayer should find the greatest fulfilment among members of the same religious community. It is our profession which binds us; it is our vows which unite us.

The religious worthy of her vow of obedience accepts and undertakes any appointment or task that is given her, not only because it is God's will for her as an individual, but also because God wills the works of the Community as a whole for His glory. As the success of a symphony orchestra depends upon each musician's submerging his solo tendencies and playing so that the beauty and harmony of all the instruments are blended, so the success of our Community in glorifying God is dependent on each religious making her contribution to its work, in such a way that all her Sisters are succeeding better because of her. Obedience can and should make such an ideal a reality.

There can be no unity in a Community, unless there is loving acceptance of authority, for unity must be organized for the common good. Superiors have as their goal a community life where mutual love is the driving force for mutual sacrifice, that God's work may be done. They likewise visualize a school giving maximum possibilities for the development of saints. The tasks in the house that they give through obedience are assigned so that there may be loving consideration for the weak, convenience for all, and efficiency in doing the work necessary for community life. Cells are apportioned with the same end in view. In the school, too, Superiors see as the ideal a distribution of classes, such that each Sister can make her maximum contribution to education for the cause of Christ. Such, likewise, should be the aim of every Sister, that by her work and by her charity every other Sister may be enabled to do her very best. Only obedience can

make such a distribution of work possible. Only the unity to which our vows call us can make that distribution successful. Who can say what wonders would be wrought in any school and convent, if every Sister were striving to see every other Sister achieve the best results of which she is capable, to see each receive those considerations which would make her best able to contribute to the harmony of the whole?

Our vow of chastity is also a unifying force. Only the heart that seeks nothing for itself can be strong enough to love others. Only the mind that sees Christ in others can produce sufficient motive force for perseverance in that love. She who has made a vow of chastity should be a wellspring of tenderness for those with whom she lives. Because of that vow, life in a religious Community should be filled with the warmth of a charity known nowhere else on earth. "The heart once consecrated to God is a tabernacle sacred to Him alone." It is a tabernacle where others can come in the hunger of their hearts and find God's love poured out on them. It is a tabernacle out of which God comes to enter other hearts and to fill them with joy and peace and love. Chastity is the antithesis of selfish self-containment. If the vow of chastity has produced in us indifference and coldness toward our Sisters, we have failed in the attainment of its purpose.

No less than the other vows, the practice of poverty must be a bond of unity. To people in the world the competition into which they are thrown by greed or necessity is a divisive force. Brothers become enemies over worldly possessions. Friends become rivals in business practices. It is not impossible that a lesser disunity should find its way into religious life for similar causes. Envy of conveniences permitted to another comes from a lack of poverty of spirit. Efforts to keep in our own possession things provided for common use, i.e., books, cleaning utensils, tools, paper, classroom decorations, and innumerable small items, efforts to keep such things breed a spirit of rivalry rather than one of unity. While it is but right that charity should make us give the best to the senior Sisters, we should have so grown, over the years, in Christ's spirit of poverty as to seek the worst. In a house and school where each Sister is striving to possess as little as is compatible with the efficient discharge of her work, what a tremendous spirit of unity and charity exists among the

Sisters, for each seeks that others be provided before herself!

In another sense too poverty is a unifying force. Nothing so draws people together as a common need. Times of crisis in the world prove this. Some of the modern lay institutes are proving it too. Where a group of workers, such as the Young Christian Workers, or the Catholic Worker group, live together in the cause of Christ and food is provided, they all share it. When it is lacking, the bond of sympathy engendered by hunger unites them. Should this be less true of religious? Without knowing physical want or insecurity, we too can experience the charity that grows for the Sisters who share the privations of poverty with us, whether those privations be hard work, weariness, cramped quarters, less tasty food, or the mortification of seeking permissions. Love of those who endure these effects of poverty with us should draw the bonds of union ever closer between us. What joys of charity we experience when we are united in mutual want! Such want need not be forced upon us. Poverty provides it, if we will recognize its loveliness, as did St. Francis, rather than concentrate on the discomfort of deprivation.

Not only our vows, but our Constitutions, which determine the mode of observing the vows, are primarily intended as bonds between Community members. A common mode of life, common dress, common prayer, all stress the ideal of unity. To those who start a Community, the experience of finding others to share with them in a common life and goal is a source of happiness. Besides that common life, we who perhaps understand the corporate worship of our daily Mass better than did our founders, should seek to make it a growing bond of unity. For it is our greatest daily common act toward that end for which we are in religion, the glorification of God. In holy Communion too we are united in Christ with our Sisters. Our common prayers, meals and recreations were all intended so that each might share in the good of all the others. It is easy to lose sight of this fact and to seek our own needs exclusively in prayer, to seek our own satisfaction in meals and recreation.

It is easy to be an individualist in community life. False ideals of perfection can confuse us. With clear vision a modern spiritual writer has said: "We should sanctify ourselves for the sake of others. . . . No longer, from any quarter, is there a sug-

gestion that self-sanctification, as its end, is sufficient. Self-sanctification, indeed, but always with that other purpose, the glory of God, the good of others behind it" (*Each Hour Remains*, by a Carmelite Nun. Newman Press). For this is the perfection that we must seek, the perfection of the Mystical Body of Christ and our own as a member of that Whole. Even the ideal of a unified and powerful Community is subordinate to that perfect whole. Not to seek that perfection is to be interested, not in Christ, but in ourselves.

As we look back over the years of our religious profession, we must recognize that our Community has either greater unity, or greater disunity, as a result of the way in which we have lived up to the spirit of our vows. If the frequent renewal of our vows is to be of spiritual profit, it must be a springboard to a new and deeper love for the Whole Christ, Head and members. For, as Thomas Merton has expressed it, "There is one thing in life that has no limit to its value, one virtue that can be practiced without any need for moderation. And that is love: the love of God and the love of other men in God and for His sake. There is no point at which it becomes reasonable to abate your interior love for God or for other men, because that love is an end in itself; it is the end for which we were created and the only reason why we exist" (*Waters of Siloe*, p. 336).

Monroe, Michigan

S.M.L.

Religious Life and Mystical Graces

IN SPIRITUAL READING, whether of lives of the saints and saintly persons, or of treatises on the interior life, we inevitably run into the mystical problem. Nearly every biography of a saint has a chapter on his or her higher prayer. Some systematic studies on prayer mention mystical graces as the normal crown of the spiritual life. They force upon us the self-examining question: What about me? If I am, perhaps, far from the heights of the mystic Mount, is this due to my own guilty neglect? But we feel somewhat reassured when we find some other spiritual book that treats of mystic graces as something extraordinary and almost exceptional, meant only for saints, either canonized or apt to be,

and even so perhaps not for all of them. That difference in spiritual teaching raises a problem. Both schools can hardly be right at the same time. The truth must lie one way or the other, unless it be midway between the two. Let us ask the straight question: What exactly does spiritual theology teach today about the mystic vocation? From the present state of studies on the spiritual life regarding the mystical problem, we should be able to answer another query that concerns every religious: Does the religious vocation constitute a call to mystical graces? If it does, or does not, in what sense and to what extent?

THE MYSTICAL PROBLEM

The call to the mystical life, such as we find it proposed today in spiritual literature, gives rise to the mystical problem. What is that problem? Nothing else but this twofold question: What is mysticism? And who are called to become mystics: everybody, or many, or few?

To the first question a great variety of answers is given. To the second all three possible solutions are found in spiritual authors. Setting aside the points of difference and discussion, we must briefly state the common, or nearly common, doctrine of today's theologians so as to base our practical conclusions regarding the religious life on firm ground.

WHAT ARE MYSTICAL GRACES?

What are mystical graces? As just hinted, there is apparently little agreement among spiritual theologians on this fundamental question. The differences, however, are often more a question of detail, or words, or method of approach, or are of a more speculative than practical character. If we neglect these differences, to look, as it were, for the common denominator of diverging theories, we may sum up the more or less common opinion about the nature of mysticism by saying:

Mystical graces, and mystical states which are marked by the habitual activity of those graces, may be said to be of two kinds: first, *the higher ones*, which belong to the last three mansions of St. Teresa, are the three forms of strictly infused contemplation, that is, prayer of full union, prayer of ecstatic union, and prayer of transforming union. Secondly, *the lower* or incipient mystical graces, or attenuated infused contemplation,

are found in those degrees of the spiritual life that are covered by the partly disputed label of acquired or active contemplation—in fact this is mixed contemplation, that is, partly acquired and partly infused. These are: prayer of simplicity and prayer of quiet, together with the dark night of the senses.

MYSTICAL LIFE AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

It is commonly agreed that the guidance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost is in a way peculiar to the mystic state. Yet some authors remark rightly, even in non-mystic states these gifts play a role, though less habitually and manifesting less markedly their proper or superhuman manner of operating (which, briefly, consists in their acting by way of instinct or intuition, rather than by rational motivation). According to the peculiar gifts which habitually dominate in this higher spiritual life, the type of mystic state is either more contemplative (gifts of wisdom and understanding) or more active (other gifts). In this latter case, which allows to conceive the mystic life as extending further than the properly contemplative life, we find the ideal realized of the “contemplative in action”.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS OF MYSTIC PRAYER

Mystical prayer, it is generally agreed, is marked by these three characters: a certain direct experience of God's presence in the soul, a simple, though general and confused, sort of intuition, and passivity, in the sense that no personal effort produced the particular state of prayer. Generally also, mystic contemplation involves both cognitive and affective acts. These characteristics are found more markedly in the higher mystical graces, less so but actually in an incipient and more or less latent manner, in the lower stages of attenuated infused contemplation.

THE CALL TO THE MYSTIC LIFE

With that distinction between higher and lower mystical prayer in mind, we can fairly well sum up present day spiritual theology of the call to these graces as follows: to the higher mystical graces relatively few are actually called so as to reach them, namely, those only who attain outstanding sanctity, such as is found in the saints that are, or are apt to be canonized. But relatively many, and at any rate many more than anti-mystics

generally believe, are called to and arrive at the lower mystical graces, that is, the intermediary stages of mixed contemplation. How many? Practically all those who persevere in fidelity to grace in the practice of mental prayer AND who live in sufficiently favourable circumstances (interior: natural gifts of character, temperament, heart and mind; exterior: sufficient peace and quiet, intermittent at least, to allow the necessary recollectedness and detachment, also proper and enlightened spiritual direction).

A few remarks on these schematic and simplifying statements: it need not surprise one that relatively few reach the higher mystical graces. No one wonders why there are not many more canonized, or canonizable saints. Not every Christian is actually called to be a canonized saint in such manner that, when he fails to reach that sublime goal, the cause of that failure lies with him alone. And according to some theologians at any rate, even that outstanding sanctity, which is apt to lead to canonization, can exist without higher mystical graces, or at all events without higher mystical *states*.

It is, however, not surprising that more are called to the lower mystical graces or states. These constitute an intermediary region between ordinary prayer (that is, vocal prayer, discursive mental prayer or meditation, and affective prayer) and infused contemplation. It is but natural that progress in the life of prayer gradually leads to where, so to speak, God Himself takes over, that is, where the passive element which is operating in every life of grace, though generally unnoticed, partly (and in different degrees, according to the different personal graces given) replaces man's active part.

REMOTE AND PROXIMATE CALL

The well known distinction between remote and proximate call to the mystical life, including its highest degrees, is more speculative than practical. To say that every one is called in a remote manner, because every one possesses or is meant to possess the principle of spiritual life, namely, sanctifying grace and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, means little in practice. For it depends, partly at any rate, on reasons beyond man's control, whether the remote call can ever become actual. And so the universal remote call to the mystic life is rather nominal. The actual and

proximate call is not universal. Those who are not actually called are not necessarily so because of their own fault.

It is well to note that one great reason why not more actually arrive at mystical graces is, it is generally agreed, the lack of fidelity and courage in achieving the active purifications and in facing the interior and exterior trials, forms of passive purification, that are inseparable from higher prayer. These purifications and trials are meant to lead to the thorough and universal detachment from self and from things, which detachment alone fits a soul for the mystic union with God.

TWO TENDENCIES IN SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY

Theologians of the spiritual life often reveal in their study and evaluation of mystic realities one of two opposed tendencies. Some incline to restrict, others to extend the concept of mystical states and the call to them. The former tend to raise the requirements for mystical graces, the latter to lower them. The above distinction between higher and lower mystical graces allows a practical synthesis between these two tendencies. The theoretical or speculative differences between opposed schools remain; whether, for example, the difference between ordinary and mystical prayer is one of kind or of degree only; also, what exactly constitutes the mystical or infused character of higher prayer. According as one inclines to either of the two tendencies just recalled, he will magnify or diminish the distance between lower and higher prayer.

Both schools, however, practically agree on the existence of the intermediary state, which is generally called acquired contemplation. This admission states the fact of experience, that the passage from ordinary to mystic prayer is gradual and may often be unnoticed. Practically every one also is agreed to say that there is no *necessary* connection between ordinary and mystic prayer, nor between acquired and infused contemplation. Acquired contemplation may be the normal outcome of progressive ordinary mental prayer, and also the normal preparation to higher contemplation. But this outcome and this preparation are neither needed for, nor determining further higher progress.

RELIGIOUS VOCATION AND MYSTIC VOCATION

Does the religious vocation involve a call to mystical graces?

We mean to say: does the vocation to the religious life constitute an actual or proximate call to either the higher, or at least the lower degrees of the mystical life? The religious vocation is the call to a life of perfection, that is, the state of life of those who profess to strive after Christian perfection in the practice of the evangelical counsels. It is right to say, when properly understood, that religious orders are meant for the average human elite (Maritain). Religious are, in a true sense, an elite. But religious life is meant not only for the average of that elite, but equally well for the elite of the elite. Were not many canonized saints religious? At any rate, all religious are actually called to the perfection of their own Institute, according to the measure of grace given to each of them, and this measure is not the same for all. Does the life of perfection, such as religious are expected to live, by virtue of their basic duty of state, of its nature involve higher or lower mystical graces?

CALL TO PROGRESS IN PRAYER

Religious life of its nature implies a serious life of prayer, or life of conscious union with God. That is apparent from the daily routine of the cloister, where a number of formal exercises of prayer, amounting to several hours each day, take their place among the daily duties of state. It equally appears from the insistence, common to all religious Rules or Constitutions, on silence and recollectedness, both in their negative aspect as excluding dissipation, and in their more important positive element as actual union with God. Accordingly, it is safe to say that all religious are called to make progress in prayer, and that they will actually make progress, if and in the measure that they are faithful to their Rule and Constitutions, particularly to those regarding prayer and silence. Since, on the other hand, we know that the grace of state to fulfil their daily spiritual duties will not be lacking, it may be said that their progress in prayer practically depends on their fidelity, according to the rules, to pray and to live a recollected life.

LIMITS TO THIS PROGRESS

Will this progress in prayer, part of every genuine religious life, necessarily or more commonly imply any of the lower or higher mystical graces mentioned above? The question comes

down to this: will religious generally, in their progress in prayer to which they are actually called, stop this side of acquired or infused contemplation, that is, in discursive or affective mental prayer, or will it more generally lead them further?

According to what was said above, the following conclusions seem to be justified: religious life does not necessarily, of its nature, involve an actual call to higher mystical grace for all religious; generally it does so for the relatively few who are actually called to the outstanding sanctity of the saints (but note well, *there are* these few). It does, however, generally imply an actual call to the lower degrees of acquired contemplation. Perhaps this means that religious who are really faithful to the demands of their life of prayer, such as their duties of state make on them, will generally be led to acquired contemplation. If, however, some religious who endeavour to be faithful, do not actually reach this attenuated infused contemplation, then this apparent failure does not by itself point to guilty neglect on their part. It may well be that because of unfavourable circumstances, interior or exterior, whether of their character or natural inclinations, or of their surroundings or exterior occupations, they do not acquire the psychological habit of contemplating which normally is the conscious and human disposition for the grace of this mixed contemplation.

LIMITS TO OUR DESIRES?

Is it wrong or right for religious to desire higher graces of prayer? Practically all spiritual authors are agreed to say that it is not unlawful to foster the desire of mystic graces, because those graces are powerful means for progress in perfection. And if that holds good for Christians in general, it applies all the more to religious. But this desire should be enlightened and practical. It is perfectly right for religious to wish for more interior life and deeper union with God. It is in accord with their very duty of state to do all they can in the practice of the ordinary degrees of prayer. In that manner they prepare themselves, as far as in them lies, for further graces God eventually deigns to give.

More definitely, it is in no way presumptuous for religious to envisage for themselves an actual call to acquired contemplation. This contemplation lies in the connatural development of

a progressing life of prayer. Though it need not necessarily follow on persevering fidelity to ordinary mental prayer, yet that fidelity will more often than not be rewarded with it. Why? Because, for one reason, it would seem that very fidelity to the first stages of mental prayer generally supposes the interior and exterior favourable circumstances which are the natural setting for that mixed contemplation. And this contemplation, in its turn, is the best possible preparation for still higher progress, if God deigns to call one to it. As to the desire for these latter higher graces, this also is not unlawful, but should be enlightened and humble. *Enlightened*, so as not to take the shadow for the substance, I mean, so as not to take for exalted mystical grace what is only a side-fact of interior grace. Para-mystical phenomena, such as visions, revelations, etc., are, according to all spiritual theologians, secondary and by themselves not desirable. *Humble*, so that it be free from all secret self-esteem, as though one did somehow deserve these higher graces. It is too clear that any conceit in this regard is the surest obstacle to genuine higher grace.

Finally, we must stress that it serves little purpose and is rather spiritually harmful, constantly to probe oneself to find out which degree of prayer exactly one has reached. After the example of St. Paul, we may leave that question and answer to the Lord: "I cannot tell; God knows!" What matters is that we apply ourselves to the humble fidelity of everyday spiritual duties. If we do this, we are sure to progress in prayer and to reach where the Lord wishes us to find Him, according to His divine good pleasure.

Kurseong, India

P. DE LETTER, S.J.

The Love of Our Neighbor

III. THE MARKS OF JESUS' LOVE FOR US

IF YOUR LOVE for your neighbor is governed by these rules, if it retains all these qualities, you can be certain that it will resemble the love of Jesus. Then, it will no longer be difficult for you to imitate our Lord in practice by always giving love, by making love your response to everything, and finally by triumphing over everything through love.

Give love always; strive to make charity the motive of all your dealings with others and the soul of what you do and say. It is little not to act contrary to charity; we should never act except through charity nor without it. Either give love, or at least give through love. You will nearly always be kind, if you are so interiorly.

There are many virtues besides charity that are sufficient for the performance of a good act. For example, faith, the fear of God, conscientious love of duty, the desire to acquire more merit. All that is good and very good. However, nothing equals charity. "The greatest of these is charity," says St. Paul (1 Cor. 13:13); consequently, the best. It gives more value to things both in the sight of God and even in that of men. The rest comes from conscience and involves only the will. Love comes from the heart and involves that also. Goodness, already so precious, is here out-distanced. Any of the aspects under which faith shows us our neighbor is itself enough to raise a soul to these heights of Christian charity. We can succeed at always giving love to our fellowmen only by going out of ourselves and living above ourselves. The task is not easy. However, it is not asking too much of a religious, nor even of a Christian.

St. Paul counsels us: "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). Take that heaven to be the Heart of Jesus and abide there as in your true dwelling-place. Your labor will be thereby more than sweetened. Does not Jesus invite you to follow this counsel when He says, "Abide in my love" (John 14:9)? If He invites you, then He will make it possible for you, and really it is too sweet not to become easy very soon. To preserve charity faithfully in your heart and to prove it by always giving love to everyone, is most certainly one of the surest, straightest and shortest roads to sanctity. A heart thus constantly united to that of Jesus will be filled inevitably with the sap which produces this fruit and then, quite simply, your response to everything will be love.

It is already very great virtue to give a real love to your neighbor at all times, even though she is friendly and agreeable. But, although to the eye of faith she always has a right to our love, no one will deny that, only too often, nature does not make her loveable. In this world we must take into account the errors

of created liberty, i.e., faults and mistakes of all kinds, to which is joined a great variety of defects, those of character, of the mind, the heart, the body. That is a universal fact, but it does not change the law of charity in any way, nor does it weaken the counsel. As I told you, charity by its very nature, which is divine, is superior to all that is human. It must not then abdicate either its dominion or even its activity.

This truth shines out in the life of Jesus and it should be conspicuous in our life also. Even towards what is not love, love should be the only response. It is within us like a sun which shines on the bad as well as on the good, like the rain that waters the thorny fields of the wicked as well as the fertile fields of the virtuous (Matt. 5:45). Listen to Jesus answering the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, those who tempt Him and hate Him in their hearts. In the same way, if your neighbor forgets herself towards you, if her looks, her words wound you, if she gives you an unmerited reproach, even accuses you of an unworthy action which shocks you, before replying hold your heart well and quiet every outburst. Calm yourself by thinking of Jesus; then in the spirit of Jesus make a charitable reply. Thus the heroic Bishop of Geneva answered a kind of madman, who was insulting and threatening him, "Monsieur, when you have torn out one of my eyes, you will not prevent me from looking at you kindly with the other."

We have sometimes counselled certain souls, to whom resignation in trial seemed beyond their power, to go beyond resignation by forcing themselves even as far as thanksgiving. In fact it happened that such efforts, by a single stroke, broke the more or less numerous fetters from which, until then, they were unable to free themselves. And thus they did what was more perfect more easily than what was less perfect.

There is reason for saying something analogous here: do not be content with wishing no ill towards her who slights you, contradicts you, or does evil to you. Do not limit yourself to ejecting from your heart every tide of bitterness, but go so far as to make a fervent, positive act of interior charity towards this neighbor and manifest it plainly and immediately on the exterior. Often you will thereby experience less pain than by merely

refraining from an offensive reply. And what a step forward in charity, what progress in union with God is merited for us by one of these courageous acts, too Christian not to be supernatural!

To act thus is, as you have doubtlessly understood, to triumph over all by love. It is to "render good for evil" (Rom. 12:21) in an eminent degree, as Jesus asks of us, and to "overcome evil by good," as St. Paul exhorts us. Thus your charity will conquer evil first in yourself, for you will thereby overcome one of the strongest temptations that can assail you. You will do more than if you were to perform miracles. You will make nature yield royally to grace; you will have to your credit one of those holy violences of which St. Matthew says: "The kingdom of heaven has been enduring violent assault, and the violent have been seizing it by force" (11:12).

Besides, your charity will conquer the evil in itself, in this sense that the act which it will inspire you to make will often more than compensate before God for the offense offered to Him by the evil deed of your neighbor. Finally, your charity will conquer evil in your neighbor by multiplying the means of touching her heart and of bringing it back to you by dint of edifying her soul. St. Paul calls that "to heap coals of fire upon (her) head" (Rom. 12:20).

All that we are telling you is very lofty and consequently very difficult. But the Gospel is so clear; the Sacraments give such strength. If grace is free to act in us, it will become very powerful. Jesus, who walks before us, is so attractive, so persuasive, so compelling. What can we refuse Him, when we see Him giving all? He gives you all for yourself and He gives, or wishes to give, all to this neighbor also, whom He loves.

The beautiful Christian family, the good, holy and happy community, is one where the charity of Jesus thus reigns in hearts, inspiring all their acts, ruling their whole life. And what a fruitful, blessed retreat is that which in the end would give to God this harvest of charity. My God, all comes back to that! My God, all is summarized in that! "Love and do what you wish," wrote St. Augustine. How he understood Jesus Christ! You could well take only this resolution, promise our Lord only an exact, valiant and perpetual fidelity in this practice, work at this virtue alone.

You would have done enough, for let us repeat with God Himself:
"Love therefore is the fulfilment of the Law" (Rom. 13:10).
(The end)

MSGR. CHARLES L. GAY

Translated from the French by S. M. C.

Convent Queries

*Now it has happened, the thing I dreaded so much.
I have been elected Superior. How should I use my
authority?*

Accept our congratulations! You have been placed in an enviable position, because, though a responsible one, it is one in which you can do much for the glory of God and the happiness of those over whom you have been placed.

You want some general advice. Very well. Remember that we Americans are a mighty independent people. From childhood on, we may say, we are taught to be free and independent in our thinking, speaking, voting, working, and in numerous other activities. The net result is that, when we become religious, we can be *led* but not easily *driven*. Superiors, then, will keep in mind the revolutionary precept of the divine Savior: "Whoever wishes to become great shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the slave of all; for the Son of Man also has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:43-45). In a community some must be first, and greater, and leaders; but sisterly humility and love should avoid a misuse of necessary authority.

The norm of those in positions of authority should be that of "loving service and ministering love". As St. Augustine phrased it: "They hold a position of authority, not for the sake of wielding authority, but in order that they may be of service." This same saint says in his Rule to pick out a few words that you may take to heart: "Let the Superior deem himself happy for the opportunity, not of exercising authority, but of serving you in charity. Before his subjects the Superior shall hold a place of honor, but in fear before God he shall be your humble servant. Let him be to all an example of good works. Let him correct

trouble-makers, strengthen those who are wavering, console the sick, with patience towards all."

Always keep in mind also that, whereas religious should reverence and obey Superiors from supernatural motives, because the religious Superior in a very special way represents Christ, the Superiors are obliged on the other hand by the law of God to respect the members of their communities. Be sure of this: the more solicitous you are to show respect and consideration for the members over whom you have authority, the more prompt and cheerful their obedience will be. Give them as much room as possible for initiative and independence of judgment in the tasks assigned to them.

Remember that a religious has not only the right but often the duty of examining, at least in a cursory fashion, the subject matter of the commands given to her. How else can she make that docile and humble representation, which is sometimes required and which is also a perfection of obedience, even of so-called blind obedience? And why not, before making decisions, sometimes discuss the matter with the subject concerned in a spirit of harmony and fellowship? This is not to say that you must apologize for giving an order, for that would be a travesty of religious authority. It is simply one phase of the counsel that, while firmly and effectively exercising your authority, you should make a sincere attempt not to place any unnecessary or unessential strain on the religious.

When I go to confession, I notice that sometimes the priest says more prayers in giving absolution, sometimes less. How is that?

Some Sisters take special courses in theology, but we doubt whether this particular point is touched upon, inasmuch as it does not concern them. However, as regards the essential and rubrical form of the Sacrament of Penance, we may say the following in answer to your quite legitimate query. *Misereatur* and *Indulgentiam* and the concluding *Passio* may be omitted without any sin, but should not be omitted without a good reason. Essential and never to be omitted are the words: *Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti*. ("I absolve thee from thy sins in the Name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Ghost.”) This is the real “form”; the rest are prayers, some of which the priest may omit for a just cause (such as lack of time or a great number of penitents).

Then, too, you must keep in mind, that some priests are naturally much faster than others in the recitation of the form of absolution, that one may possibly say the form and all the prayers in the time it takes for another to say only a part of the prayers. Again, others may of set purpose be leisurely about this part of the administration of the Sacrament of Penance. But let this suffice.

I have a little personal defect, a birthmark on my face. But I was accepted as a Sister because of the unusual quality of my vocation. Some of the Sisters have advised me to paint and powder the birthmark, so that it will not show. What would you advise?

Don't do it. Offer that sacrifice to God. Remember the saints, who even prayed that they might be disfigured in order that their beauty might not be a source of sin to others. If you paint and powder, you will continually have to do so, spending much time before the mirror. And even then you will constantly be worried lest the mark should show through. If you do not paint and powder, others will get used to your appearance and will not notice the defect much.

Apropos of this we might say that the less Sisters look into the mirror the better. We recall how once upon a time, when giving a retreat to Sisters, we found that their Constitutions plainly forbade the use of a mirror at any time. Marvelling greatly, we asked the Superior whether that particular rule was really observed. We were calmly assured that it was. We asked how in the world they managed to keep things on straight, since they never used a looking glass. We do not recall the answer to this. But we do distinctly recall that, when the Sisters came to the altar rail to receive their divine Spouse in that closest of all unions, they were all without exception spick-and-span and neat and tidy.

Not all Sisters are so strict in this matter of making use of a mirror. The regulations differ with different communities. No doubt many of them look upon the mirror as a necessary

modern convenience and use it in a sensible way. They will hardly make an intemperate and immoderate use of it. Anyhow, most of us would have greater peace of heart, if we didn't know what we look like.

To continue in this train of thought for yet a moment, let us add that it would not be seemly for Sisters to use cosmetics or facial powder, even if there were defects to be concealed, as mentioned above. Nor is it in order to paint the finger nails, as some young Sisters may be inclined to do when even the good little girls in their classes do it. Smoking is entirely ruled out, of course. We are of the opinion that, if there are special smoking parlors, where girls who have come to the convent to give themselves to God, are given certain hours in which to "taper off" and gradually get rid of the habit of smoking, such a practice should be abolished. "Tapering off" in this manner only prolongs the agony. The best way to quit smoking is simply to *quit*—abruptly, absolutely, and for good. Many good girls out in the world smoke cigarettes. When such in the generosity of their hearts give themselves to God in the religious life, they will also have the generosity to simply quit, for the love of God. It must be done; it can be done; and it will be done.

As regards hot weather and perspiration and crowded classrooms or reading rooms at the university and the use of a scented powder or a bit of cologne, who are we to pronounce upon the propriety of such things! Perhaps those in close proximity to such nuns will call them blessed.

What are some of the means for the preservation of chastity, especially for religious?

Keep the rules, which often read something like this: The Sisters shall strive to imitate the purity of the angels, and shall keep themselves most chaste in body and mind. Therefore, they shall earnestly apply themselves to prayer, often strengthen themselves with the Bread of Angels, restrain their senses, carefully shun all idleness, prudently mortify the body, eagerly desire heavenly things, and cherish a special veneration, devotion, and filial love for the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Virgins. The Sisters shall strictly avoid all familiarity with persons of the other sex, as well as everything that might arouse suspicion or give scandal among seculars, who are easily scandalized in this regard.

They shall be vigilant and on their guard against dangers that may arise through their occupation or through their relations with seculars, carefully avoiding the occasions of sin.

If you would ask us to go somewhat into detail, we might repeat and amplify: Guard well the gates of your senses, eyes and ears, and touch and all, in order not to expose yourself to temptation. Keep your heart free from irregular affections, particular friendships, secret ties with the world. Avoid all undue familiarity with anyone. Do not speak freely about worldly things, scandals, etc. Do not listen with satisfaction to flattering remarks, much less to unbecoming conversations. Observe custody of the eyes in church, street, bus, train, especially when reading periodicals containing questionable pictures. Expel at once dangerous memories and imaginations. Both when alone and in company, prudently and sensibly maintain a reserve and modesty worthy of a true spouse of Christ. Observe due modesty while dressing and undressing, mindful of the presence of God, and doing nothing of which He would not approve. Consider your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit; hold it in honor. Have a reverent attitude towards sex. Try to realize that everything God made is good; that it is the abuse of things that makes them bad; that to sacrifice sexual desires and give them back to God by the vow of chastity is to give God a precious gift; that you must first have the humility and the sincerity to recognize that such desires are yours to offer by sacrifice in the religious state.

To which we might add a word about curious glances at dangerous objects, inordinate affections, seeking too much ease and comfort in posture, observing exterior order and cleanliness, temperance at table, avoiding too much care as to your appearance.

When temptations come (and God will permit that you should be exercised with regard to this virtue too), be humble, distrustful of yourself; have the greatest confidence in God, and be quick to pray and to persevere in prayer. "Jesus, Mary!" as a plea for help should be uttered from the heart again and again, until the temptation is vanquished. And thus each time it comes. So, too, in temptations against chastity, say as calmly and deliberately as you can: "Dear Jesus, dear Blessed Mother, You know that if it lay in my choice and power, this pestering thought or picture or desire or feeling would not be with me, not even for a moment.

I do not want it; it is with me against my will." Cultivate this attitude conscientiously. Let your slogan everywhere and always, at home and abroad, alone and with others, morning, noon and night, consciously and conscientiously, be—"Nothing at all of that ever for me!"

When your temptations have been strong, it is well to reveal them in all humility to your confessor in your next regular confession. When you are in a state of perplexity and doubt, do not remain in that state of trouble without seeking advice and a remedy. Never remain away from Communion because of temptations; for a thousand temptations do not make a single sin. Go all the more fervently to be strengthened by the Bread of Angels. Only in case of a voluntary and deliberate fall, when there is absolutely no doubt in your mind, must you *first* go to confession.

Divine Savior Seminary REV. WINFRID HERBST, S.D.S.
Lanham, Maryland

BOOKS FOR SISTERS IN INDIA

A Mother Superior from India wrote recently. After thanking us for *Sponsa Regis*, she asked: "I sometimes wonder whether some . . . Communities, who have . . . flourishing schools and works, would not help us to build up our library. Our Community library is still very small, as our funds do not allow us to buy books often. If each Community sends us even only one book, what a boon it would be for our foundation. Our young Indian Sisters are all well educated, having all finished their secondary grade classes, some even have an University degree either of B.A. or B.Sc. Consequently, good spiritual books, ascetical or biographical, are very welcome." Any Sisters, who would like to help these contemplative adorers, should get in contact with: Rev. Mother Godelieve, Convent of Mary of Nazareth, 3 Nundidroog Road, Bangalore 1, India.

The Convent Book Shelf

GOD'S HERALDS. By J. Chaine. Translated by Brendan McGrath, O.S.B. Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., New York. 1955. 236 pages, cloth \$3.95.

Reading the works of the Prophets without knowing the atmosphere in which they were written is something like reading a newspaper editorial without first referring to the date

line and the front-page headlines. The author has eliminated this difficulty by preparing "a simple guide, whose purpose it is to place the prophetic writings in the historical setting for which they were originally written." As such the book is not an introduction to the study of the

Prophets, not a commentary, nor a doctrinal or apologetic treatise, but "simply an introduction to the reading of the Prophets." Written especially for major seminarians, priests, and educated laymen who love the Scriptures, the book is meant to introduce the reader to the reading of the inspired texts and not to replace them.

Perhaps the best endorsement of the volume is made by the translator in his preface: "The author's foreword is dated Epiphany, 1932. Nothing that has since come to light in the field of Biblical studies deprives his work of its essential value." D.D.

A MAN BORN AGAIN. By John E. Beahn. Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1954. 208 pages, \$3.00.

A Man Born Again is an account of St. Thomas More's life as the saint himself is presumed to have seen it during the final purifying days in the Tower. Attention is focussed on the development of humility in the brave Englishman, who in death as in life continues to attract others. However, this reader would rather go on regretting that St. Thomas left no *Confessions*. Though well enough written and moderately interesting, *A Man Born Again* fails on two counts. The first is minor. It is simply that for a reader already acquainted with Saint Thomas and the Tudor period, much of the interest of the book lies outside the book itself. A reader to whom the subject is new is unfortunately dependent on Mr. Beahn's deliberately limited view. The second count is more serious. All but the most glib and guileless reader must say repeatedly, "But how can you know that? If this hero were your own

creation—yes, fine; you could know why he does what he does. But to make of St. Thomas More your creation—that is something else again." If there is such a thing as illegitimate edification, this book is a sample. S.M.L.

THE PROMISED WOMAN: AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. By Brother Stanley G. Mathews, S.M., ed. The Grail, St. Meinrad, Indiana. 1954. 316 pages, cloth \$4.00.

Many of these articles and documents are published in English for the first time. This volume will be a valuable source for the teaching of the Church on the Immaculate Conception, as it includes, along with the encyclicals of the Popes since the fifteenth century and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the best that has been written by theologians up to the present time on that subject. S.C.

THE STORY OF THE ROSARY. By J. G. Shaw. Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1954. 175 pages, cloth \$3.25.

Did or did not St. Dominic receive the Rosary in a vision from our Lady? Who exerted the greatest single influence on the shaping of the Rosary as we have it today? Could the Rosary change still further? The author, a Canadian journalist and literary critic, gives us well documented answers to these and many other questions on the Rosary. The reader will learn strange and surprising things about the devotion which is as familiar as breathing to most of us. S.C.

FATIMA, HOPE OF THE WORLD. By Joseph A. Pelletier, Washington Press, 110 W. Boylston Drive, Worcester, Mass., 1954. 203 pages, paper \$1.50, cloth \$3.00.

Our Lady's mission initiated at Fatima in 1917 becomes increasingly clear and significant as the world crisis develops. This sequel to the author's *THE SUN DANCED AT FATIMA* deals with the Fatima after-

math. The complete story, as closely as careful research can ascertain it, is faithfully and readably set down within the pages of these two books. S.C.

MARY IN OUR LIFE. By Rev. William G. Most. P. J. Kenedy, 12 Barclay St., N. Y. 1954. 323 pages, cloth \$4.00.

The first part of the book is a dogmatic treatise on Mary's role in the Redemption. The author draws heavily on recent papal documents in this section. He then presents the general principles of the spiritual life, the Mass, and Sacraments, with Mary's relation to them to help the lover of Mary develop a deeper spiritual life in which she plays the prominent part God intended for her. S.A.

VOCATIONAL REPLIES. By Jude Senieur, O.F.M.Cap. St. Anthony Guild, Paterson, N. J. 1954. 223 pages, \$1.75.

A catechism for vocational directors which will be welcomed by all who have contact with young people. The questions came from vocational directors in the United States and Canada, and therefore are the problems familiar to all religious communities; for example, What can religious do to give parents a more Christian attitude in the matter of religious vocations? Why are there so few vocations among student nurses? What are some effective ways and means of fostering vocations? What do girls find unattractive about the religious life? Are prep schools for girls desirable? S.A.

THE CONVENT AND THE WORLD. By Sister Mary Laurence, O.P. Newman, Westminster, Md. 1954. 199 pages, cloth \$2.75.

This is a trilogy of previously published works: *She Takes the Veil*, *Within the Walls*, and *They Live the Life*.

For Doreen, an aspirant to the religious life, Sister Mary Laurence's letters carry a vital description of the human yet supernatural life of contemplative Dominicans. The correspondence between Sister and Margery, a recent convert, emphasizes

the vows of poverty and obedience and is an effective antidote for the too frequent misunderstanding of the real meaning of contemplative life. Much of Sister's explanation applies equally to any Order. S.A.

YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN. By Dennis J. Geaney, O.S.A. Fides, 21 West Superior, Chicago, Ill. 1954. 178 pages, cloth \$3.25.

You are not your own. You belong to Christ, who has a job for you to do, a job that only you can do, a job that is different from the one He intends me to do. This is the core of his message, and Father Geaney amplifies it by recounting how Catholics both as individuals and as members of groups are now doing their jobs. **YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN** offers laymen and those who train and form the laity for their part in the life of the Church an inspirational opportunity to share what a variety of experiences has taught the author about the why and how of the lay apostolate. S.E.

BEFORE THE DAWN. By E. M. Zolli. Sheed and Ward, N. Y. 1954. 209 pages, cloth \$3.25.

This odyssey of Professor Eugene Zolli, one time Chief Rabbi in Rome, impresses the reader with the compelling power of grace. A great love for Jesus Christ incomprehensibly drew him even as a boy, and the trials and sufferings attending his rabbinical career during the Nazi occupation of Rome only served to deepen that attraction, until the only course of action was complete acceptance of Christ and His Church. S.C.

BORN CATHOLICS. Compiled by F. J. Sheed. Sheed and Ward, N.Y. 1954. 279 pages, cloth \$3.50.

Born (or cradle) Catholics formed to a single mold by the Church! There are some willing to believe it—but they do not know people. The contributors, authors in their own right, express what being a Catholic means to them. Their individualities are very evident here. Many of their thoughts will be shared by the reader and all will be stimulating. S.A.

READING FOR CATHOLIC PARENTS. By F. J. Sheed. Sheed and Ward, N.Y. 1955. 32 pages, paper 50c.

A pithy and penetrating pamphlet designed to inform parents of their obligation to be well formed mentally through the right kind of reading, so that they may mold the minds of their children to the pattern of Christ. It includes lists of books for the children and for the parents.

S.C.

THE CHILDREN'S SHEPHERD. Katherine Burton. P. J. Kenedy, N.Y. 1954. 236 pages, cloth \$3.75.

Father John Drumgoole, the Don Bosco of America, was ordained at the age of 53. His untiring work for the neglected homeless children of 19th century New York City began in a newsboys' home and developed into the well known "Mount Loretto" for homeless and destitute children. His loving zeal for the souls of these children, as well as his excellent methods in child care, education, and vocational training brought recognition from fellow social workers. His Institution has served as a model for other similar works throughout the country.

S.A.

SHE TALKED WITH CHRIST. A New Study of St. Margaret-Mary Alacoque. By Marjorie Hoagland. Apostolate of the Press, N.Y. etc. 48 pages, large pamphlet, 25 cents. Order from Society of St. Paul, 2187 Victory Blvd., Staten Island 14, N.Y.

SVJATA HODINA, THE HOLY HOUR, in the Greek Rite (Byzantine-Slavonic) Catholic Church. Compiled and edited by Very Rev. Julius Grigassy, D.D. 1955. 64 pages, 35 cents. Order from: Rev. Dr. J. Grigassy, 431 George St., Braddock, Pennsylvania (ask for catalogue of additional religious books, etc. from the same address).

32 MILLION CATHOLICS . . . the Church in the United States. A Study Compiled for the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 3801 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 12, Iowa (order

from this address). 1955. Pamphlet, 25 cents a copy; \$15.00 per 100.

This pamphlet was written for two purposes: "(1) To inform Catholics in foreign countries about Catholicity in the U.S., and (2) to show how the Catholic Church can prosper, develop, and contribute its share in a free democracy. Attractively illustrated and concise, the booklet presents a summary of the many and varied activities of the Catholic Church in the U.S. Intended as a good-will builder among citizens of other countries, it is equally valuable for U.S. Catholics who may wish to refresh their memories concerning the vast organization of the Catholic Church in their own country."

PROMISED IN CHRIST. A Betrothal Crowning of a Bride. Order from: The Grail, Grailville, Loveland, Ohio. 54 page pamphlet, illustrated.

This booklet is the "response to many requests for simple procedures to follow at a formal betrothal and the Crowning of a Bride on the eve of her wedding. . . . Another custom becoming increasingly popular in this country. . . . The betrothal in this booklet is an arrangement by Rev. Philip T. Weller, worked out some years ago on the occasion of the engagement of one of Grailville's students."

ESSAYS ON THE PRIESTHOOD. (St. Meinrad Essays Series, Vol. 11, No. 1). 100 page brochure, \$1.00 a copy. Order from St. Meinrad Essays, St. Meinrad Seminary, St. Meinrad, Indiana. Contains nine essays on important priestly topics and apostolates, together with an introduction by the Archbishop of Indianapolis, and "St. Pius X, Model of the Diocesan Priest" by the Apostolic Delegate to the United States.

THE SCALE OF PERFECTION. By Walter Hilton. Translated into Modern English, with an Introduction and Notes by Dom Gerard Sitwell, O.S.B. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 316 pages, cloth \$3.50.

This spiritual classic dates from the fourteenth century. "Its peculiar

value lies in the fact that Hilton alone among the mystical writers of the period wrote specifically for the purpose of instruction and this treatise epitomizes the age in which he lived while borrowing whatever is best from the works of those who preceded him." "The Hilton tradition... can be described roughly as the approach to the spiritual life through affective prayer rather than through meditation in the modern sense..." A valuable introduction by the translator helps to orient the reader.

A RETREAT FOR LAY PEOPLE.

By Msgr. Ronald Knox. Sheed & Ward, 840 Broadway, New York 3, N.Y. 1955. 258 pages, cloth \$3.00.

This very valuable book has twenty-four chapters of helpful, practical spirituality, distributed over topics that add up to more integral Christian living for the laity. There are two holy hours interspersed. Sisters will have occasion to recommend it to lay persons who are making or not making a retreat.

THE LIFE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, Combined with **THE BITTER PASSION** and **THE LIFE OF MARY**. 4 volumes. From the Revelations of the Venerable Anna Catharina Emmerick, a Recorded in the Journals of Clemens Brentano. Arranged and Edited by the Very Rev. Carl E. Schmoeger, C.S.S.R. Published by: Academy Library Guild, P.O. Box 549, Fresno, California. 1954. \$24.00 for four volumes.

There is hardly a religious who has not heard of the stigmatic and visionary, Anna Catharina Emmerick, who lived from 1774 to 1824, whose mission was to enlighten the dark "Age of Enlightenment" and to expiate its sins committed against the Humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. But few probably have read "this most complete life of Christ ever published", which was recorded, day by day and year by year, by the famous literary figure, Clemens Bren-

tano. This great work, however, has been out of print for many a year, until the Academy Library Guild of Fresno made this photographic reproduction of the 1914 English edition, which was the first and only complete English version entitled **The Lowly Life and Bitter Passion**.... The new title is a restoration of the original titles used in the German (4th) edition of 1881, which also forms the basic text for the present English version.

No new editorial work was done in publishing it (lithographic process), but there appears a new and excellent foreword by Robert Larson, together with helpful new maps to identify the many geographic places, a genealogy, chronology, and a final statement on Our Lady's house at Ephesus by the same Mr. Larson. The interesting literary history of all this appears in the "Foreword", where the writer provides a key to help the reader adjust problems that may arise in the course of reading the volumes.

As is well known, the private revelations of Anna Catharina Emmerick cover a wealth of historical, liturgical and mystical material. The newcomer to this work will be amazed at the factual realism which results from the heaping of historical data for both the Old and New Testaments. The vast amount of narrative, containing details of geography, archaeology and chronology, cannot but impress the reader. And that brings us to the significance of the mystic and her life work.

It is not the purpose of this review to subject this work to the test of genuineness. For instance, we do not claim competence to weigh the merits of the two "traditions", whether

the Mother of God died in Jerusalem or Ephesus. But there was an undeniable mission of Anna Catharina Emmerick to defend the Humanity and historicity of Jesus Christ in an age of rationalism, when He was relegated by "historians" and "scientists" to the thin air of myth. The "wise men" of her day were confounded by a simple, uneducated girl. Anna Catharina Emmerick fits into her age as a providential rebuke to the intellectual degeneracy of "great men", and also as a providential guide to the victim spirit of more humble souls. True science, study and research in our times have proved that Anna Catharina Emmerick was right about the Savior's Humanity, and not her benighted opponents who voted against the historicity of Christ. But most modern religious readers will take up these volumes without worrying about bygone battles; they will rather refresh their piety and devotion with the deeply pious and devout story of Jesus and Mary, of Old Testament figures, and of the early Church. They will welcome the reprint of an extraordinary work.

P.R.B.

THE SCHOLAR AND THE CROSS. The Life and Work of Edith Stein. By Hilda C. Graef. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. 1955. Pp. 234, cloth \$3.50.

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